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ABSTRACT

According to a General Accounting Office study, virtually no money is being spent on consumer education, although consumer education has been authorized under the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act of 1981 and under the Education Amendments of 1976. The Education Consolidation and Improvement Act of 1981 authorizes state and local education agencies to use their block grants in accordance with educational needs and priorities. These agencies are free to keep such records as they determine are necessary for fiscal audits and program evaluation, since nothing in the statute or regulations indicates the types of records that must be maintained. The Education Amendments of 1976 also provide for funding of a consumer and homemaking education program. Federal funds are made available to states on a formula grant basis for educational and ancillary services. The United States Department of Education is also initiating an effort to promote adult literacy. Interest is being generated in the area of consumer rights and responsibilities for adult consumers who are functionally illiterate. (YLB)

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THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S PERSPECTIVE FOR FUNDING CONSUMER EDUCATION

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COALITION FOR CONSUMER EDUCATION

CRYSTAL CITY, VIRGINIA

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FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S PERSPECTIVE FOR FUNDING CONSUMER EDUCATION

IT IS A REAL PLEASURE FOR ME TO BE HERE TODAY AS A PART OF THE COALITION FOR CONSUMER EDUCATION, I AM PARTICULARLY PLEASED THAT DR. DAVID SCHOENFELD, PRESIDENT, COALITION FOR CONSUMER EDUCATION, AND CONSUMER ADVOCATE, J.C. PENNEY COMPANY, NEW YORK GAVE ME THIS OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE SOME OF MY THOUGHTS ON CONSUMER EDUCATION FROM THE FEDERAL PERSPECTIVE. MY PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION WITH DAVID SCHOENFELD GOES BACK MANY YEARS AS DOES MY ADMIRATION FOR HIS CONTRIBUTION TO CONSUMER EDUCATION. I FIRST MET DAVID SCHOENFELD NEARLY 20 YEARS AGO WHEN WE WERE BOTH INVITED BY ESTHER PETERSON TO ATTEND A WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON CONSUMER EDUCATION.

CONSUMER EDUCATION FROM A FEDERAL PERSPECTIVE IS A MOST TIMELY TOPIC. AS YOU KNOW, ECONOMIC SURVIVAL AND THIS NATION's CAPACITY TO BECOME MOR. PRODUCTIVE ARE OF PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE TO PRESIDENT REAGAN. SINCE I'VE BEEN AT THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, I HAVE HAD THE PRIVILEGE OF ADDRESSING GROUPS LIKE YOURS ACROSS THE COUNTRY. AS SOME OF YOU MAY HAVE HEARD ME SAY BEFORE, I BELIEVE EDUCATION HAS A KEY ROLE TO PLAY IN THE ECONOMIC RECOVERY OF OUR NATION. EXPLICIT IN THE BEST DEFINITION OF CONSUMER EDUCATION I'VE BEEN ABLE TO FIND IS "THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE CONSUMER TO THE ECONOMY." CONSUMER EDUCATION CONTRIBUTES TO THE REVITILIZATION OF OUR ECONOMY IN A VITAL AND UNIQUE WAY -- BY PREPARING ALL OF US TO USE RESOURCES WISELY AND EFFECTIVELY.

TODAY, I'VE BEEN ASKED TO DISCUSS CONSUMER EDUCATION FROM TWO PERSPECTIVES: 1) AS ONE OF THE 33 PROGRAMS OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

AUTHORIZED UNDER THE EDUCATION CONSOLIDATION AND IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 1981, AND 2) CONSUMER EDUCATION AS AUTHORIZED UNDER THE EDUCATIONAL AMENDMENTS OF 1976.

BLOCK GRANTS PROGRAMS

THE EDUCATION CONSOLIDATION AND IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 1981 AUTHORIZED STATE AND LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCIES TO USE ITS FUNDS FOR ANY PURPOSE OF PROGRAMS CONSOLIDATED BY THE ACT AND IDENTIFIED IN SUBPARTS A, B, AND C. GRANTEES ARE REQUIRED ONLY TO FOLLOW THE ANTECEDENTS' PURPOSES IN DESIGNING THEIR PROGRAMS, NOT THE PRIOR LAWS, REGULATIONS, OR ACTIVITIES.

OF THE GRANTS TO THE STATES AT LEAST 80 PERCENT WILL BE DISTRIBUTED TO LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES PRIMARILY ON SCHOOL ENROLLMENT BASIS BUT WEIGHTED FOR EXTRA COST FACTORS SUCH AS CONCENTRATION OF POVERTY OR SPARSELY POPULATED AREAS. PRIVATE SCHOOL CHILDREN AND TEACHERS ARE TO PARTICIPATE EQUITABILY IN THE BENEFITS OF THE PROGRAMS. UP TO 20 PERCENT OF THE STATE GRANT IS TO BE USED BY THE STATE FOR PROGRAM ADMINISTRATIVE USE.

A STATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE IS TO BE APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR TO ADVISE THE STATE EDUCATION AGENCY ON THE ALLOCATION OF FUNDS AND OPERATION OF THE PROGRAM(S). MEMBERSHIP ON THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE IS TO REPRESENT:

- PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOL CHILDREN AND TEACHERS;
- PARENTS;
- LOCAL AND REGIONAL SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS;

- INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION; AND
- THE STATE LEGISLATURE.

FUNDS UNDER CHAPTER 2, SUBPARTS A, B, AND C OF THE "CONSOLIDATION OR BLOCK GRANT" SYSTEM MAY BE DIVIDED AMONG THE FOLLOWING THREE AREAS:

(SUBPART A) - BASIC SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

SCHOOL DISTRICTS ARE TO MAKE PLANS FOR A SYSTEMATIC STRATEGY FOR IMPROVING THE BASIC SKILLS INSTRUCTION FOR ALL CHILDREN AT THE HIGH SCHOOL LEVELS, INVOLVING TEACHERS, ADMINISTRATORS, AND TO THE EXTENT PRACTICABLE, PARENTS, AND UTILIZING ALL AVAILABLE RESOURCES IN A COMPRE-HENSIVE PROGRAM. STATES MAY ALSO SUPPORT ACTIVITIES TO ENLIST THE ASSISTANCE OF PARENTS AND VOLUNTEERS TO IMPROVE THE PERFORMANCE OF CHILDREN IN THE BASIC SKILLS.

(SUBPART B) - EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT AND SUPPORT SERVICES

STATE AND LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES MAY USE THE FUNDS FOR ACQUISITION OF SCHOOL LIBRARY RESOURCES, TEXTBOOKS, AND INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS; TO IMPROVE LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES' PRACTICES; TO ASSIST LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO ADDRESS EDUCATIONAL PROBLEMS CAUSED BY ISOLATION OR CONCENTRATION OF MINORITY GROUPS OF CHILDREN IN CERTAIN SCHOOLS; FOR TEACHER TRAINING AND INSERVICE STAFF DEVELOPMENT; GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING; TO IMPROVE MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOL PROGRAMS; AND TO ASSIST

LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES TO MEET THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN IN SCHOOLS UNDERGOING DESEGREGATION.

(SUBPART C) - SPECIAL PROJECTS

STATE AND LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES MAY USE THE FUNDS FOR PROGRAMS INCLUDING:

- UNDERSTANDING THE METRIC SYSTEM;
- EMPHASIZING ARTS IN THE CURRICULUM;
- IN-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP;
- CONSUMER EDUCATION;
- PREPARING STUDENTS FOR EMPLOYMENT;
- CAREER EDUCATION;
- ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION;
- HEALTH EDUCATION;
- EDUCATION ABOUT THE AMERICAN SYSTEM OF LAW;
- ACADEMIC AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION FOR YOUTH OFFENDERS;
- ENCOURAGING DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS IN BIOMEDICAL CAREERS;
- USE OF EDUCATION (PUBLIC) FACILITIES FOR COMMUNITY CENTERS;
- MEETING THE SPECIAL NEEDS OF CHILDREN WITH HIGH PERFORMANCE (GIFTED AND TALENTED);
- PROMOTING SCHOOL SAFETY AND REDUCING SCHOOL VANDALISM; AND
- ETHNIC HERITAGE STUDIES.

WE MUST KEEP IN MIND THAT THE PURPOSE OF CHAPTER 2, SUBPARTS A, B, AND C, WHICH I JUST DISCUSSED, IS TO CONSOLIDATE AT THE FEDERAL LEVEL,

CATEGORICAL GRANT PROGRAMS AND TO TRANSFER THE DECISION-MAKING AUTHORITY REGARDING WHICH PROGRAMS ARE FUNDED TO SEA'S AND LEA'S. FURTHERMORE, THESE FUNDS MAY BE USED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND PRIORITIES OF THE SEA'S AND LEA'S DETERMINED BY THOSE AGENCIES. THEREFORE, THE LAW DOES NOT REQUIRE SEA'S OR LEA'S TO CONTINUE ANY PARTICULAR CATEGORICAL GRANT PROGRAM NOW AUTHORIZED UNDER THE "EDUCATION CONSOLIDATION AND IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 1981 (P.L. 97-35)." RATHER, SEA'S AND LEA'S ARE FREE TO CHOOSE THOSE PROGRAMS THEY WILL OPERATE WITH FEDERAL FUNDS AS OUTLINED IN CHAPTER 2 OF P.L. 97-35.

ANOTHER QUESTION WHICH I CONTINUE TO HEAR RAISED IS, WHAT RECORDS SHOULD SEA'S AND LEA'S RETAIN IN ORDER TO BE IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE LAW?

THERE IS NOTHING IN THE STATUTE OR REGULATIONS WHICH INDICATES THE TYPES OF RECORDS THAT SEA'S OR LEA'S MUST MAINTAIN. THESE AGENCIES ARE FREE TO KEEP SUCH RECORDS AS THEY DETERMINE ARE NECESSARY FOR FISCAL AUDITS AND PROGRAM EVALUATION.

YOU MIGHT ASK WHAT HAS HAPPENED WITH THE FUNDS UNDER CHAPTER 2, SUBPARTS A, B, AND C. THE GAO, THE U.S. GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE, ASKED THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS FOR INFORMATION SHOWING HOW LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES ARE USING THE FUNDS WHICH THEY RECEIVED UNDER CHAPTER 2. IN RESPONSE TO THIS REQUEST FOR INFORMATION,

AASA'S OFFICE WENT TO THE FIELD WITH 2,500 QUESTIONARIES COVERING THE VARIOUS SIZE SCHOOL DISTRICTS. THE RETURN RATE WAS APPROXIMATELY 45 PERCENT. THE FOLLOWING RESULTS WERE FOUND.

- THE MAJORITY OF THE RESPONDENTS (88%) INDICATED THEY WERE USING THE FUNDS PRIMARILY FOR INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS.

- SPECIFICIALLY, INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS INCLUDED SUCH ITEMS AS: BOOKS AND MATERIALS; COMPUTER HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE; AND AUDIOVISUAL EQUIPMENT.

THE STUDY DID NOT REVEAL FOR WHICH CONSOLIDATED PROGRAMS THE INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS ARE BEING PURCHASED.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT EXPENDITURES INCLUDED STAFF TRAINING AND SALARIES. VIRTUALLY NO MONEY IS BEING SPENT ON THE EMERGENCY SCHOOL AID ACT, METRIC EDUCATION, CONSUMER EDUCATION, HEALTH EDUCATION, AND CAREER EDUCATION.

ACCORDING TO THE OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION, TWO QUESTIONS HAVE BEEN ASKED ON UTILIZATION OF THESE FUNDS, THEY ARE:

1. HOW SEA's PLAN TO EXPEND THE CONSOLIDATED (BLOCK) GRANT FUNDS?
   AND
2. HOW LEA'S PLAN TO USE THEIR BLOCK GRANT FUNDS?

IN THE CASE OF CONSUMER EDUCATION ONLY THREE SEA'S INDICATED THEY WERE PLANNING TO USE ANY FUNDS FOR CONSUMER EDUCATION, WHILE EIGHT LEA'S INDICATED SOME FUNDS MAY BE UTILIZED FOR CONSUMER EDUCATION. DATA ON THESE TWO QUESTIONS IS CURRENTLY BEING SUBMITTED TO THE:

EDUCATION PROGRAM ASSISTANCE AND
OPERATIONS BRANCH
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
ROOM 1167 DONOHOE BUILDING
400 MARYLAND AVENUE, S.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20202.

THE EDUCATION CONSOLIDATION AND IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 1981 DOES HAVE STATE COORDINATORS WHICH PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO PERSONS WHO ARE INTERESTED IN ACQUIRING MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROGRAMS I HAVE DISCUSSED IN THIS SECTION OF MY PRESENTATION. I BELIEVE THAT MANY OF THE COORDINATORS ARE PRESENT TODAY.

DURING THE REMAINDER OF MY TIME, I WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS THE "EDUCATION AMENDMENTS OF 1976."

THE SPECIFIC PROGRAM WHICH PROVIDES FOR CONSUMER EDUCATION FUNDED UNDER THE EDUCATION AMENDMENTS IS SUPBART 5, CONSUMER AND HOMEMAKING EDUCATION, A SPECIFIC CATEGORY UNDER VOCATIONAL EDUCATION. THE PROGRAM IS FUNDED SOLELY FOR THE PURPOSES OF PREPARING MALES AND FEMALES, YOUTH AND ADULTS FOR THE OCCUPATION OF HOMEMAKING, WHICH IS A VIABLE

OCCUPATION ACCORDING TO THE DICTIONARY OF OCCUPATIONAL TITLES AND THE NEW VOCATIONAL PREPARATION AND OCCUPATIONS DOCUMENT. THE CONSUMER AND HOMEMAKING EDUCATION PROGRAM IS FUNDED FOR 1983-84 WITH FEDERAL FUNDS AT $31.6 MILLION, WHICH IS AN INCREASE OF $2.5 MILLION OVER 1982-83. THE FEDERAL FUNDS ARE MADE AVAILABLE TO STATES ON A FORMULA GRANT BASIS. THESE FUNDS ARE PROVIDED FOR BOTH EDUCATIONAL AND ANCILLARY SERVICES. AT LEAST ONE-THIRD OF THE FEDERAL FUNDS ARE TO BE USED FOR PERSONS IN ECONOMICALLY DEPRESSED AREAS OR FOR AREAS WITH HIGH RATES OF UNEMPLOYMENT FOR THE PURPOSES OF ASSISTING CONSUMERS IN IMPROVING THEIR HOME ENVIRONMENTS AND QUALITY OF LIFE.

SOME INTERESTING HIGHLIGHTS OF THESE PROGRAMS FOR SCHOOL YEAR 1981 INCLUDE:

- THE STATE OF MARYLAND HAS DEVELOPED A VIDEO/SLIDE-TAPE SERIES AIMED AT SENIORS IN HIGH SCHOOL ON CONSUMER ISSUES AND PROBLEMS FOR THIS AGE GROUP. A TEACHER MANUAL AND A STUDENT MANUAL ARE ALSO PROVIDED.

- CALIFORNIA HAS JUST DEVELOPED A NEW CURRICULUM DESIGNED FOR ASSISTING CONSUMERS IN PURCHASING AND UTILIZING FOODS FOR SENIORS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS.

- IN DANBURY, CONNECTICUT, THE CONSUMER AND HOMEMAKING DEPARTMENT IS TURNING TO COMPUTERS ON A LIMITED BASIS TO ASSIST STUDENTS

IN HOME MAINTENANCE COSTS AS WELL AS EVALUATING OTHER COMPONENTS OF THEIR LIFESTYLES, INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS AND INDIVIDUAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT WHICH RELATE TO CONSUMER EDUCATION.

- IN MICHIGAN, ADMINISTRATORS REPORT THAT THEIR GREATEST ACHIEVEMENTS SINCE THE PASSAGE OF THE 1976 AMENDMENTS HAVE BEEN IN DELIVERING MORE VISIBLE, RELEVANT CONSUMER EDUCATION PROGRAMS.

- NEW MEXICO HAS OPERATED A WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTER SERVING OVER 350 PERSONS WITH MANAGEMENT, CONSUMER EDUCATION AND CAREER INFORMATION.

- STUDENTS IN FLORIDA AND MISSISSIPPI AND OTHER STATES HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN BY ATTENDING A LEARNING LAB FOR SPECIAL REMEDIAL ASSISTANCE WITH READING, MATH, AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS BEING APPLIED THROUGH THE CONSUMER EDUCATION PROGRAMS. THE DATA FROM THE STUDENTS INDICATE THAT THEIR INTEREST IN STAYING IN SCHOOL HAS INCREASED ALMOST 100 PERCENT. ALSO, POST-TEST SCORES INCREASED, PARTICULARLY IN MATH AND READING, OVER PRE-TEST SCORES.

- PROGRAMS IN CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS ARE AVAILABLE IN WEST VIRGINIA, KENTUCKY, LOUSIANA AND MANY STATES TO TEACH CONSUMER AND LIVING SKILLS TO INMATES. AT THE WEST VIRGINIA INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL FOR BOYS, ONE BOY HAD A TATTO ON HIS ARM THAT SAID, "BORN TO RAISE HELL AND COLLECT FOOD STAMPS." THIS TATTOO AND THE

ATTITUDE IT REPRESENTED WERE OF GREAT CONCERN TO THE TEACHER. AS THE DAYS IN THE CONSUMER EDUCATION PROGRAM CONTINUED, THIS BECAME A CONCERN FOR THE STUDENT ALSO. AFTER A BRIEF TRIP HOME, THE STUDENT (MALE) RETURNED TO THE INSTITUTION WITH HIS TATTOO REMOVED. THOSE WHO KNOW THE PAIN OF REMOVING A TATTOO CAN SEE THAT THIS PROGRAM MUST HAVE MEANT SOMETHING SPECIAL TO THAT YOUNG MAN.

- IN TEXAS, A RESEARCH PROJECT ENTITLED "STUDY OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF CONSUMER AND HOMEMAKING EDUCATION, WITH THE EMPHASIS ON CONSUMER EDUCATION" WAS CONDUCTED. A QUESTIONNAIRE WAS MAILED TO 3,000 FORMER STUDENTS FROM ALL GEOGRAPHIC AREAS OF THE STATE AND FROM VARIOUS SIZE SCHOOLS. AT THIS TIME, 600 QUESTIONNAIRES HAVE BEEN RETURNED. NINETY-EIGHT (98) PERCENT OF THE COMMENTS HAVE BEEN EXTREMELY FAVORABLE TO THE BENEFITS OF CONSUMER EDUCATION AS A COMPONENT OF THE CONSUMER AND HOMEMAKING EDUCATION PROGRAM. AREAS MOST OFTEN MENTIONED AS BENEFICIAL WERE EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH, BUDGETING, AND GOOD MANAGEMENT OF RESOURCES. ONE HISPANIC FEMALE GRADUATE SAID, "I HAVE USED MY CONSUMER KNOWLEDGE IN MANAGING MY HOME AND BUDGET. I ALSO FEEL I AM A BETTER PARENT AND HOMEMAKER."

- COMPARATIVE ENROLLMENT DATA AVAILABLE THROUGH THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS FOR 1976 THROUGH 1980 SHOWED A POSITIVE CHANGE WITH A 25.0 PERCENTAGE INCREASE IN CONSUMER EDUCATION PROGRAMS.

- OVER 70 PERCENT OF THE SCHOOLS INCLUDED COURSES ADDRESSING THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE CONSUMER AND THE ECONOMY, E.G., "INFLATION AND RECESSION", AND "CHANGING ROLES OF INDIVIDUALS IN FAMILIES AND SOCIETY" IS BEING TAUGHT BY ALMOST 90 PERCENT OF THE SCHOOLS IN A SURVEY CONDUCTED BY IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY.

REGARDLESS OF THE MODE FOR TEACHING CONSUMER EDUCATION--THROUGH THE "BLOCK GRANT SYSTEM" OR THROUGH "VOCATIONAL EDUCATION: CONSUMER AND HOMEMAKING EDUCATION"--AN INFORMED AND EDUCATED PUBLIC WILL HAVE A POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE NATIONAL ECONOMIC SYSTEM. CONSUMER DOLLARS SHAPE THE MARKETPLACE WITH AN EXPENDITURE OF APPROXIMATELY TWO-THIRDS OF THE GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCT-ALMOST TWICE THAT OF GOVERNMENT AND BUSINESS COMBINED. I KNOW WHATEVER PROGRAMS ARE OFFERED IN THE AREAS OF CONSUMER EDUCATION, THEY MUST BE OF THE HIGHEST QUALITY AND EXCELLENCE.

I'D LIKE TO CLOSE WITH A FEW REMARKS ON SOME EXCITING DEPARTMENT-WIDE ACTIVITIES AND A PARTICULAR CONSUMER-EDUCATION EFFORT OF MY OFFICE.

IN THE VERY NEAR FUTURE, SECRETARY BELL WILL ANNOUNCE A MAJOR INITATIVE TO PROMOTE ADULT LITERACY IN THE UNITED STATES. SOME OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THIS IMPORTANT EFFORT INCLUDE:

1) LAUNCHING A NATIONAL AWARENESS CAMPAIGN;

2) ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL ADULT LITERACY PROJECT;

3) ENCOURAGING THE GOVERNORS TO ESTABLISH STATE OR LOCAL ADULT LITERACY COUNCILS;

4) ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL TASK FORCE ON ADULT LITERACY;

5) ENLISTING THE INVOLVEMENT OF COLLEGE STUDENTS AND FACULTY VOLUNTEERS IN THE CAMPAIGN FOR ADULT LITERACY;

6) JOINING WITH THE HANDICAPPED COMMUNITY IN A CAMPAIGN FOR LITERACY FOR THE OUT-OF-SCHOOL, OUT-OF-WORK HANDICAPPED ADOLESCENT; AND

7) ESTABLISHING A PROGRAM TO RECOGNIZE EXEMPLARY LITERACY PROGRAMS AND VOLUNTEERS.

IT IS TRADITIONAL DURING "CONSUMER WEEK" OBSERVANCES TO RECOGNIZE THE CONSUMER EDUCATION EFFORTS OF SCHOOLS, GOVERNMENT, COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS, BUSINESSES, LABOR UNIONS, AND THE MEDIA. THE ECONOMIC REALITIES OF THE EIGHTIES SUGGEST, HOWEVER, THAT WE MUST BEGIN TO FOCUS ON CONSUMERS IN LIGHT OF THEIR CHANGING RESPONSIBILITIES AS WELL AS THEIR RIGHTS. CONSUMER EDUCATION MUST HELP ALL CONSUMERS TO DEFINE AND ACCEPT THESE RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF EVERYONE.

ACCORDING TO THE ADULT PERFORMANCE LEVEL STUDY FUNDED BY THE DIVISION OF ADULT EDCUATION SERVICES, CONSUMER ECONOMICS/EDUCATION IS THE GENERAL KNOWLEDGE AREA WHICH POSES THE GREATEST DIFFICULTY FOR THE GREATEST NUMBER OF ADULTS, ESPECIALLY FOR THOSE ADULTS WHO ARE FUNCTIONALLY ILLITERATE.

THIS YEAR THE OFFICE OF VOCATIONAL AND ADULT EDUCATION IS GIVING SPECIAL ATTENTION TO THIS PROBLEM. WE ARE IDENTIFYING WAYS OF STRENGTHENING THE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS OF THOSE ADULT CONSUMERS WHO ARE FUNCTIONALLY ILLITERATE, THOSE WHO ARE IN NEED OF CONSUMER INFORMATION RELEVANT TO THEIR LIVES AND EDUCATIONAL NEEDS.

THE DIVISION OF ADULT EDUCATION SERVICES IS WORKING CLOSELY WITH THE ADULT EDUCATION DIRECTORS IN THE 57 STATES AND INSULAR AREAS TO CREATE INTEREST IN A NEW PROGRAM CONCEPT, <u>CONSUMER RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES</u>.

THIS INITIATIVE PLACES AN EMPHASIS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF "PROBLEM-SOLVING" SKILLS. PROBLEM SOLVING PROCESSES INCLUDE THE BASIC SKILL OF THINKING, THAT IS OF SECURING EVIDENCE, ANALYZING IT, AND UNDERSTANDING THE ISSUES AND POSSIBILITIES FOR INDIVIDUAL GROWTH AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY. THE DIVISION HAS DISTRIBUTED KITS OFFERING A VARIETY OF LEARNING ACTIVITIES FOR ADULTS.

I SUBMIT THAT THE CONSUMER AND HOMEMAKING TEACHERS IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION HAVE A WEALTH OF EXPERIENCES AND MATERIALS THAT CAN BECOME A MAJOR RESOURCE FOR THE ADULT EDUCATION TEACHERS. ADULT EDUCATION TEACHERS ARE FINDING THAT THERE IS A DEARTH OF MATERIALS PREPARED FOR THE ADULT IN THIS CURRICULUM AREA. THEY CAN REPLICATE OR ADAPT THE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION MATERIALS FOR USE OF THEIR STUDENTS AT DIFFERENT COMPETENCY LEVELS, ESPECIALLY THOSE ADULTS IN GRADE LEVEL I(0-8).

ADULT EDUCATION TEACHERS IN TURN HAVE SPECIALIZED KNOWLEDGE AND METHODOLOGIES USEFUL IN DEVELOPING SUCCESSFUL LEARNING STRATEGIES FOR THIS ADULT POPULATION. THESE VALUABLE RESOURCES MUST BE SHARED. MY OFFICE IS IN THE UNIQUE POSITION TO ASSIST IN ADVANCING THE CONSUMER EDUCATION OF THE OVER 23 MILLION FUNCTIONALLY ILLITERATE ADULTS IN THE UNITED STATES. I AM DIRECTING THE DIVISIONS OF THE OFFICE OF VOCATIONAL AND ADULT EDUCATION TO COLLABORATE MORE CLOSELY IN BUILDING THE CAPACITY OF THE STATE PROGRAMS TO DELIVER QUALITY CONSUMER EDUCATION SERVICES TO ALL THE NATION'S PEOPLE TO MEET OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO THE LEAST EDUCATED ADULT PORTION OF OUR PUBLIC.

ANOTHER PROGRAM AT THE DEPARTMENT:

IN PREPARATION FOR THE NATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY CONFERENCE THIS FALL, MEMBERS OF THE DEPARTMENT, INCLUDING MYSELF, ARE PARTICIPATING

IN A NATION-WIDE TELECONFERENCE WITH NATIONAL LEADERS IN BUSINESS, INDUSTRY, AND EDUCATION. THIS TELECONFERENCE IS UNIQUE IN THAT WE'RE COMMUNICATING WITH ONE ANOTHER VIA COMPUTER.

FINALLY AND BRIEFLY, THE DEPARTMENT IS (IN KEEPING WITH THE SECRETARY'S ANNOUNCED GOALS) WORKING TOWARD:

1) ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION;

2) STRENGTHING EDUCATION FOR WORK;

3) PREVENTING AND REDUCING FRAUD, WASTE AND MISMANAGEMENT; AND

4) REDUCING REPORTING REQUIREMENTS AND PAPERWORK.

THANK YOU